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BOROUGH OF ABERYSTWYTH.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year 1939.

Edited by

DANIEL IDRIS EVANS, Ph.D.(Lond.), B.Sc., M.R.C.S.,
L.R.C.P.

For the late

ABRAHAM THOMAS, M.B., B.S.(Lond.).
Medical Officer of Health.

ABERYSTWYTH BOROUGH COUNCIL.

Public Health Officers of the Authority.

Medical Officer of Health (Part Time)
and

Superintendent of Isolation Hospital.. ABRAHAM THOMAS, M.B.
B.S. (Lond.).

Manager of Isolation Hospital

.. MISS ANNE THOMAS,
S.R.N.(Fever and General), Cert. C.M.B.,
Cert. R.S.I., Cert. Health Visitor.

Sanitary and Housing Inspector
and

Certified Inspector of Foods

.. OSBORNE J.EVANS,
M.R.San.I., M.I.H.

Junior Assistant

.. W.A.BOWEN.

ABERYSTWYTH BOROUGH.

| | | | |
|--|----------|--------|-----|
| Area in acres of Land and Inland Water..... | 1,141 | | |
| Registrar General's estimate of population (a) | | | |
| 1939..... | 9,011 | 9,477 | (b) |
| " County " | 51,650 | 53,180 | |
| Inhabited Houses..... | 2328. | | |
| Rateable Value. | £64,369. | | |
| Sum represented by a penny rate..... | £256. | | |

(Note. - (a)-Adjusted figures for the calculation of birth rates.

(b)-" " " " " of death rates.)

EXTRACTS FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1939.

| LIVE BIRTHS | { Legitimate | Total | M | F |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------|----|----|
| | | 84 | 39 | 45 |
| STILL BIRTHS | { Legitimate..... | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| | { Illegitimate..... | - | - | - |
| TOTAL BIRTHS..... | | 90 | 43 | 47 |

| | Aberystwyth M.B. | County | England & Wales. |
|--|---------------------|--------|---------------------|
| Birth Rate per 1,000 of Population..... | 9.42 | 12.20 | 15.00 |
| Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births... | 55.50 | 53.05 | -- |

| DEATHS | Total | M. | F. |
|--------------|-------|----|----|
| | 133 | 62 | 71 |

| | Aberystwyth M.B. | County | England & Wales |
|--|---------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Comparability Factor..... | 0.90 | - | - |
| Death Rate per 1000 estim- ated average population..... | 14.04 | 16.12 | - |
| Adjusted death rate..... | 12.64 | 13.37 | - |

Deaths from puerperal causes:

(Maternal Mortality)

| | Aberystwyth M.B. | County | England & Wales |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Puerperal sepsis | Nil | Nil | - |
| Other puerperal causes | Nil | 2 | - |
| Total | Nil | 2 | - |

Death rate of Infants under one
year of age. (Infantile Mortality)

| | | | |
|---|------|------|------|
| All infants per 1,000 live births | 23.5 | 59.5 | 50.0 |
| Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births..... | 23.5 | 59.0 | - |
| Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births..... | Nil | 97.0 | - |
| Deaths from Cancer (all ages).... | 8 | 108 | - |
| Deaths from Measles (all ages)... | 0.0 | 0.0 | - |
| Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)..... | 0.0 | 0.0 | - |
| Deaths from Diarrhoea under 2 years of age..... | 0.0 | 4.0 | - |

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

(a) LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Dr Ernest Jones, the County Medical Officer of Health carried out the bulk of the bacteriological examinations until the outbreak of war, and the town is greatly indebted to him for his work in this connection in the past years.

Blood sera and other specimens were sent to the Clinical Research Association.

At the outbreak of war the Medical Research Council acting on behalf of the Ministry of Health opened one of its Emergency Public Health Laboratories at Aberystwyth. The laboratory at present serves five Mid Wales Counties. Its main function is to assist civilian and military members of the medical profession in the early diagnosis, and prevention of spread of infectious diseases.

The staff are always available for consultation on any bacteriological problems, and full use of the laboratory facilities has been made by doctors practising in the Aberystwyth Borough.

Three hundred and forty four specimens were submitted to the laboratory from the Borough of Aberystwyth during the four months September - December, 1939. The majority of these consisted of swabs from suspected cases of diphtheria and their contacts. Several carriers of diphtheria were detected amongst the evacuee children arriving in Aberystwyth at the outbreak of war.

The following are examples of examinations undertaken at the laboratory:-

- (1) Examination of swabs from cases and contacts of diphtheria, scarlet fever, epidemic sore throats.
- (2) Diagnosis and search for origin of outbreaks of typhoid, paratyphoid, food poisoning, dysentery, anthrax, plague, cholera, etc.
- (3) Examination of water specimens for suitability for consumption.
- (4) Diagnosis of cases of suspected meningitis.

No charge is made for the services of the laboratory and all the running expenses of the laboratory are at present borne by the Government.

The laboratory is staffed by two medically qualified pathologists:-

Dr A.C.Jones, (of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine).

Dr Marjorie Sudds, (of the Royal Free Hospital, London, and the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital).

and two skilled technical assistant:-

Mr A.J.Hart, (of the British Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith, London).

Mr F.N.Cannon, (of Charing Cross Hospital).

I commend the setting up of the Emergency Public Health Laboratory in Aberystwyth to the notice of the members of the Council. It is one of the most important events in the realm of local public health during 1939, and it was invaluable in helping to control the spread of infectious diseases after the influx of evacuees into the town.

The chemical examination of the water supply was carried out by Professor T.Campell James, D.Sc, who reported as follows on the plumbosolvency during 1939:-

"During the year the water in the Storage Reservoirs was tested on three occasions and free flowing water from service taps at least once a week.

"The limestone treatment plant at the lower storage reservoir was in efficient action throughout the year, acidity being removed without any noteworthy increase in the hardness of the water. In the upper storage reservoir the water was exactly neutral on each occasion when tests were carried out.

"In no case was the lead content of free flowing water from service taps greater than the limit of safety".

The bacteriological examination of the water supply was carried out by Mr S.B.Thomas, M.Sc., at the Dairy Bacteriological Laboratory of the University College of Wales, who summarised a report on the most valuable work carried out during the year as follows:-

"(1) The average results of the bacteriological examination of over 650 samples of Aberystwyth water show that the quality of the untreated water is exceptionally good during winter and spring (December - June) but that the water is polluted at the source with coliform organisms during the summer (July - September).

"(2) The increase of coliform organisms appears to coincide with the periods of heavy rainfall allied with an increase of sheep population on the hills around the two sources.

"(3) Regular series of samples taken at the source, reservoirs and houses in Aberystwyth show a fairly regular decrease in coliform organisms content, due presumably to sedimentation of bacteria in the lake, pipes and reservoirs.

"(4) Sedimentation of bacteria in the small reservoir is not very marked, as it is being continually drawn upon. Coliform free water is generally stored in the large reservoir during winter and used during summer.

"(5) It is interesting to find that a large proportion (69%) of the coliform organisms found in the water during summer months are of the faecal type. All human faecal sources are in this case practically negligible so it is to be presumed that they are of animal source.

"(6) It is evident that there is considerable pollution of the water at Llyn-Llygad Rheidol during summer months; the coliform organisms being probably derived from animal sources.

In the event of human faecal pollution at the lake or reservoirs it would not be possible to detect it under present circumstances particularly during summer, as human faecal micro-organisms cannot be distinguished from those of animal origin.

"(7) It appears therefore that it is necessary to protect the water supply by means of one or both of the following:-

- {a} Enclosure of the gathering grounds.
- (b) Treatment of the water so as to destroy all faecal bacteria."

(b) AMBULANCE FACILITIES. No change. It is a pity that the town should depend entirely on the services of the local St. John's Ambulance Association for the transport of all non-infectious and accident cases. The town owes this unit a debt of gratitude for the most valuable services voluntarily given at all hours of the day and night.

(c) NURSING IN THE HOME. No change.

(d) TREATMENT CENTRES AND CLINICS.

Clinics provided by the County Council:-

Maternity and Child Welfare.
Dental.
Ophthalmic.
Venereal Disease.
Orthopaedic.

Clinic provided by the King Edward VII. Welsh National Memorial:-
Tuberculosis Clinic.

(e) HOSPITALS, PUBLIC and VOLUNTARY.

The Aberystwyth Infirmary and Cardiganshire General Hospital. The extensions were completed during the year, and officially opened in June by Mr D.Owen Evans, M.P. The hospital now contains 66 beds and offers 'In-Patient' and 'Out-Patient' treatment for medical and surgical cases including massage, Electrical treatment, X-Rays and an ophthalmic clinic held by the Consulting Ophthalmic Surgeon, Mr Roy Thomas, M.B., Ch.B. (Edin.), F.R.C.S. (Edin.), D.O.M.S., R.C.P.S. (Eng.).

The Aberystwyth Fever hospital.

The Emergency Fever hospital set up by the County Council at Tanybwllch under the Government Evacuation Scheme, for the treatment of official evacuees.

The County Maternity Home established by the County Council.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

HOUSING.

The work carried out during the year is similar to the work carried out during the previous years, but owing to limitation of space the details are not recorded but are available for future reference.

Early in 1939 the Sanitary Inspector was appointed the Chief Billeting Officer under the Government Evacuation Scheme. The enormous amount of work takes up a large portion of his time, including nights and Sundays.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

- (a) MILK SUPPLY.
- (b) MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

The inspection and supervision of the milk supply and other foods was carried out similar to previous years, and details are recorded.

(c) ADULTERATION.

This is carried out by the County Council.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

In spite of the influx of evacuees [redacted] into the Borough the incidence of diphtheria was less than in the previous year.

Unfortunately sporadic cases of Enteric Fever are reported in the Borough from time to time and so far it has not been possible to trace the source or sources of these cases.

During the year Measles and Whooping Cough were included in the list of notifiable diseases.

There were no arrangements for any large scale immunisation of children against diphtheria, but a certain amount of immunisation has been carried out by the private practitioners of the town.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND
OTHER DISEASES.

| Disease. | Total cases notified. | Cases admitted to hospital. | Total deaths. |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Smallpox | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Scarlet Fever ... | 13 | 13 | Nil |
| Diphtheria | 38 | 38 | 1 |
| Enteric Fever ... (including Para-Typhoid) | 2 | 2 | Nil |
| Puerperal Fever ... | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Puerperal Pyrexia . | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Other Diseases (Generally notifiable):- | | | |
| Ophthalmia Neonatorum | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Encephalitis Lethargica | 1 | Nil | Nil |
| Erysipelas | 3 | Nil | Nil |
| Whooping Cough ... | 2 | Nil | Nil |
| Measles | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| TOTAL ... | 62 | 53 | 1 |

TUBERCULOSIS.

Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925,

relating to persons suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis employed in the milk trade, called for no action.

Public Health Act, 1936, Section 172,

authorising the compulsory removal to hospital of persons suffering from tuberculosis was not invoked.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1939.

| Age Periods | NEW CASES | | | | DEATHS | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------|---|---------------------|---|
| | Respiratory | | Non- Respiratory | | Respiratory | | Non- Respiratory | |
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| 0- | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1- | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5- | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 15- . .. | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 25- . .. | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| 35- . .. | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| 45- . .. | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - |
| 55- . .. | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| 65 and upwards | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| TOTALS | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | 6 | - | 1 |



